



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on Parliamentary Elections in Tajikistan**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Paul W. Jones  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 03, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the fact that parliamentary elections held this past Sunday in Tajikistan proceeded in a peaceful manner, without violence and with the participation of six political parties.

We are encouraged by positive developments such as an improved electoral code, the adoption of transparent ballot boxes and ballot security measures, and reasonably balanced state media coverage complete with public service announcements. We note also that Tajik officials worked constructively with international and non-governmental organizations to prepare the nation for these elections.

We fully concur, however, with the ODIHR's preliminary assessment that despite some improvement over past elections, Sunday's polls ultimately failed to meet many key OSCE and international standards for democratic elections, and were marred by large-scale irregularities. Widespread proxy-voting, failure to follow proper vote counting and tabulation procedures, imbalanced composition and non-transparent operation of electoral commissions, disqualification of candidates through arrest and imprisonment, and closure of and interference with independent media outlets were among the numerous irregularities cited in the report that cast a shadow over the campaign and election day proceedings.

As we await ODIHR's final report, the United States urges Tajikistan immediately to build on the positives it achieved in preparing for and holding these elections, and to correct the serious shortcomings detailed in these findings. We also urge the Government to investigate allegations of fraud and abuses promptly and transparently. Such remedial efforts are indeed critical as Tajikistan looks ahead to presidential elections in 2006 and beyond.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.